A LETTER *to a* NOBLE PEER *of the* REALM, *about his late* Speech *and* Petition *to His* Majesty.

My Lord,

THo the great esteem I have always had as well for your Lordships Parts and Prudence, as your Father's Loyalty, inclines me to make a favourable construction of your Words and Actions; yet the late Speech and Petition publish'd under your Name, are of so strange a Nature, and so ill an Aspect in our present circumstances, that I cannot but acquaint you with my Thoughts upon that unseasonable subject; where, (did I not see my Sovereign so nearly concern'd,) that many do construe this to be not so much petitioning, as threatening His Sacred Majesty, I would have pass'd it over, and buried my resentments in *Oblivion*.

I am sorry, my Lord, you begin with so weak an observation from Histories and Records, as that many *Parliaments* have been unfortunate, when call'd at places remote from the Capital City. Did you ever observe how unfortunate have many *Parliaments been*, when call'd in this Capital City, or how many have been fortunate, when elsewhere conven'd? Do not all Writers of the late Rebellion observe it a great over-sight in his late Majesty, not to have call'd his *Long Parliament* to *York*, or some other place remote from the City of *London*; where so many *Factious Cabals* were held, and so many *Pernitious Contrivances* hammer'd, together with the *Rabble* tumultuous running to *Westminster-Hall*, and *the Common-Councils Petitioning*, or rather *Advising* the King, (Mechanicks turning Politicians, and leaving their Shops and Trade, to sit at the Helm of Government,) that all wise men conclude, thence came the Plague of *War* and *Desolation* upon the whole Kingdom?

But your Observation is not so weak, as your Precedents are emphatical and mysterious: You instance three unhappy Kings, and without the least ground in History, you seem to suppose the places of calling their Parliaments, the cause of their miscarriage. I am sure you know the contrary is manifest by our most authentick Monuments and Records. To popular fears and jealousies, fomented by ambitious and discontented Grandees; These, as well as other Princes in general, ow'd almost all their troubles, as now we do in a great proportion.

To these *Henry* the 4th (by you mention'd,) ow'd the unnatural Broils and Distractions of his Kingdom, when they, together with *Lewis* King of *France*, incited the Son to rebel against the Father; in which they were thus far more excusable than others, that the Son was no Bastard, but the undoubted Heir of the Crown, and a titular King. These were in a great measure the chief causes of all the mischiefs and miseries of H. 3. Reign, when under the colour of redressing the peoples *Grievances*, they brought upon the Nation the greatest *Grievance* of all, *an intestine Civil-War for many years together*; and tho' they loudly pretended to fight for *the Liberty of the Subject*, yet themselves were no better than so many Tyrants, as ancient and modern Authors testifie. *Baker*, p. 86.

And for *H.* 6th His Fate was the consequence of his Grandfather's Usurpation, for *De male Quæsitis vix gaudet tertius hæres*,

The people at last, weary of their change, began to open their eyes, and think it better to submit to their lawful Prince, than to a violent Usurper; Nevertheless this Revolution could not be effected without a great deal of difficulty, had not a gap been open'd by the ambition of wicked Statesmen, who to have the sole management of Affairs to themselves, contriv'd the Death of the King's Brother, and only support, the good Duke of *Glocester*; as now some conspire against his R. H. the better to enable themselves to dispose of the King as they please.

Thus for your Speech, but your Petition runs a little further.

In the first place you aggravate the dangers of *Popery*, of which all true *Protestants* are sufficiently apprehensive; yet withal, My Lord, we are too sensible, *Papists* are not our only enemyes we have whole swarms of Republicans and others, influenced, and often misled by those, that hate the Name, but (as to themselves) love the practice of Arbitrary Power; that pretend to stand for the Church of *England*, but really advance *Presbytery*; In fine that would fain perswade us they love the King, tho' by their actions any man of sense may perceive how little they care for his Government.

You are troubl'd, it seems, that the next Parliament is to meet at *Oxford*, *where* (you say,) *neither Lords nor Commons can be safe, but will be daily expos'd to the Swords of the* Papists *and their adherents. Of whom too many have crept into his Majesties Guards.* Do you know, my Lord, any such *Papists* now in the Guards? If you do, 'tis all our duty to our King and Country, to have them secur'd: If not, 'tis a groundless surmise and a frivolous pretence, unfit to be mention'd by Persons of Honour. Certain it is, we have more reason to believe our Noble Petitioners inclining to Dissention, then his Majesties Guards inclin'd to *Popery*; for the latter do openly protest against all *Papists*, the former do zealously solliche for the *Phanaticks*, endeavouring to unite them to the Church of *England*, not by their coming to us, but ours to them, we loosing our Ground, and they still keeping their own. Besides, we know, the later have often taken Tests and Oaths against the Innovations of *Popery*; but I could never find that the former took any against the Novelties of *Schism*.

If his Majesty thinks himself secure at *Oxford*, and doubts not to commit his Sacred Person to his Guards; What reason have you to apprehend any danger? Sure, 'tis his Majesties Death, not yours, the *Papists* have hitherto design'd; how then can you be so apprehensive, while he is secure?

As for the Kings Evidence, I doubt not but they will cheerfully endure a little inconvenience, to make an end of this Execrable Plot. 'Tis an advantage most of them have, to endure the greatest hardship, which now, I am confident, they will not decline to consummate the great work they have so well begun.

My Lord, I wish as heartily as any one in *England*, the frequent meetings of Parliament, and the good correspondence of King and People; I am perhaps as much concern'd, as another, to have the liberty of the Subject preserv'd inviolable. Yet when I see those that should be preservers of this Liberty, first invade it, and endeavour to Monopolize Arbitrary Power to themselves, I think self-preservation allows me to oppose them. 'Tis a true saying, *corruptio optimi pessima*, and experience tells us, That Parliaments may Err as well as Kings.

I will conclude, with a short reflection on some transactions preceding the *Long Parliament*, in the late King's Reign; where 'tis observable that His Majesty finding his Parliaments still retrograde, and bent rather to foment than compose the Differences of the Kingdom, in *September* 40. He summon'd the Great Council of His Peers, to consult about the weighty Affairs of the Nation: '*But this* (saith a late Historian) *was not very well lik'd by those who favour'd the* 'Scots, *whose chief Design aim'd at the calling of a Parliament, which they fear'd the meeting of the* 'Peers might prevent. *Wherefore the Earls of* Bedford, Hertford, Essex, Warwick, Mouldgrave, 'Bullingbrook *and* Bristol, *the Lords* Say, Brook, Paget, Mandevile, *and the Lord* Edward Howard '*presented a Petition to the King, representing many great Distempers and Dangers, threatning the* 'Church, *and* State, *and his Royal Person; as, sundry Innovations in matters of Religion; Increase of* 'Popery, *by employing Papists in places of Trust; The great mischief that might ensue, if the Forces* 'rais'd *in* Ireland *shou'd be brought into* England, *&c. For remedy whereof, they pray, That a Parlia-* 'ment *might be summon'd, to redress these grievances, and punish the Authors; and likwise to compose* 'the War *with* Scotland *without Blood, and unite both Kingdoms against the common Enemy of the* 'Reformed Religion.

And this was seconded by another Petition of the Common-Council of *London*, to the same effect, see *Baker* p. 470.

These, my Lord, were as fair pretences and as plausible inducements, to have a Parliament then called, as any can offer at present; and yet the World knows what pernicious Designs were then a hatching against the King and Government, by those very persons that promoted that Petition; and happy were his Majesty, had he rejected their importunity. *To every thing there is a season*, saith the wise Man; and without doubt there is a season for petitioning. 'Tis certainly our duty, with all humility, to beg of our Sovereign what we think necessary or convenient for the publick good; yet for to press him to it, when he declares against it for good reasons, (as we ought to suppose,) is a very great presumption, not to be endur'd in a Subject. If the Laws have settled in the King the absolute power of calling, adjourning, proroguing and dissolving his Parliament, when and where he pleases, shall we be wiser than the Laws, and limit our Princes will?

Besides, when discontented Statesmen are found the promoters of such Petitions, 'tis natural to suspect they do it for some sinister Design, *Timeo Danaos & dona ferentes*. If the great Politician *Achitophel* hang'd himself through discontent, because his Counsel was not followed, we cannot in prudence but think others will leave no stone unremov'd to satisfie their passion. There are some Weathercocks in the World, who had a hand in all the Revolutions of their time, *modo harum, modo illarum partium*, but never faithful to any; If your Lordship be so far overseen as to joyn with these, they will undoubtedly leave you in the lurch, when 'tis too late to repent. Therefore in time consider the Wise man's advice: *My Son fear thou the Lord and the King, and meddle not with them that are given to change; for their calamity shall rise suddenly, and who knoweth the ruine of them both?* Pro. 24. 21.

I am,

Your Lordships real well-wisher
and humble Servant,

L. S.

*EB65. Sw 168. T681c